

Everything tends to prove that the French Plenipotentiary had received no positive instructions from the 5th of February, and that, after all the delay which Napoleon constantly created, Caulaincourt never had it in his power to answer, categorically, the propositions of the Allies. Napoleon never intended to make peace at Chatillon on the terms proposed. He always hoped that some fortunate event would enable him to obtain more favorable conditions.

On the 18th of March, that is to say, three days after the presentation of this project of a treaty, the Plenipotentiaries of the Allies recorded in the protocol their reasons for rejecting the extraordinary project of the French Minister. For my part, I was convinced, for the reasons I have mentioned, -that the Emperor would never agree to sign the conditions proposed in the ultimatum of the Allies, dated the 13th of March, and I remember having expressed that opinion to M. de Talleyrand. I saw him on the 14th, and found him engaged in perusing some intelligence he had just received from the Duke of Vicenza, announcing, as beyond all doubt, the early signature of peace. Caulaincourt had received orders to come to a conclusion. Napoleon, he said, had given him a *carte blanche* to save the capital, and avoid a battle, by which the last resources of the nation would be endangered. This seemed pretty positive, to be sure; but even this assurance did not, for a moment, alter my opinion. The better to convince me, M. de Talleyrand gave me Caulaincourt's letter to read. After reading it I confidently said, "He will never sign the conditions." M. de Talleyrand could not help thinking me very obstinate in my opinion, for he judged of what the Emperor would do by his situation, while I judged by his character. I told M. de Talleyrand that Caulaincourt might have received written orders to sign, for the sake of showing them to the Plenipotentiaries of the Allies, but that I had no doubt he had been instructed to postpone coming to a conclusion, and to wait for final orders, I added, that I saw no reason to change my opinion, and that I continued to regard the breaking up of the Congress as nearer than appearances seemed to indicate. Accordingly, three days afterwards, the